

THE ANGEL OF PEACE

of God, even as the holy apostles did," she writes to Caterina dello Spedaluccio and Giovanna di Capo, two of her women who had been left behind in the city, and who repined at her long absence; " after they had received the Holy Spirit, they separated from each other and from that sweet Mother Mary. Albeit it would have been their greatest delight to have stayed together, nevertheless they gave up their own pleasure, to seek the honour of God and the salvation of souls. This is the rule that we must adopt for ourselves. You are in Siena, and Cecca and the *nonna* are at Montepulciano. Fra Bartolommeo and Fra Matteo have been there, and will be again. Alessa and Monna Bruna are at Monte Giovi, eighteen miles from Montepulciano ; they are with the Countess and Madonna Isa. Fra Raimondo and Fra Tommaso and Monna Tomma and Lisa and I are at the Rocca among evil-doers, and they are eating so many incarnate demons that Fra Tommaso says that he has bad pains. And, with all this, they cannot have enough; their appetite increases, and they are finding work that is highly paid. Pray the Divine Goodness to give them big and sweet and bitter mouthfuls."¹ And to Lapa herself, the "nonna" at Montepulciano, she wrote : " You know, dearest mother, that I, your miserable daughter, have been placed on earth for nought else save the honour of God and the salvation of souls. To this my Creator has called me. I know that you are content that I should obey Him. I beseech you, if you think that I am staying longer than you would wish, to be content; for I cannot do anything else. I believe that, if you knew the case, you yourself would send me hither. I am here to heal a great scandal, if I can. It is not the fault of the Countess ; and, therefore, you must all pray to God and the glorious Virgin that they send us a good result. Do you, Cecca and Giustina, drown yourselves in the blood of Christ crucified ; for now is the time to prove virtue in the soul." ²

¹ Letter 118 (175).

^a Letter 117 (167), Catherine's mother was by this time herself one of the Mantellate. A brief from Gregory XI grants special spiritual favours to Lapa,